

By the present amendment, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 18 have each been amended to address the informalities noted in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. Accordingly, removal of this objection is respectfully requested.

In addition, claim 10 has been amended to add a paragraph regarding the third regions and to clarify lines 13-16 questioned in the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, rejection. Based upon this amendment, it is respectfully submitted that the informalities noted in paragraph 6 of the Office Action have now been removed, and reconsideration and removal of the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, rejection is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 10-13 and 19 as being anticipated by Ikeda (USP 6,307,217) is also respectfully requested. By the present amendment, each of the independent claims 1, 10 and 19 has been amended for purposes of clarification. In particular, each of these claims has been amended to clearly define that the main word lines, sub-word lines and sub-data lines each extend in a first direction whereas the data lines and main-common data lines each extend in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction. It is respectfully submitted that this structural arrangement of these various lines is quite different than the structural arrangement taught by the Ikeda reference, as will be discussed below.

For purposes of assisting in the discussion of this matter, a sketch is provided herewith which shows Fig. 5 of the present application in comparison with Fig. 3 of U.S. Patent 6,307,217. As noted above, in accordance with the present invention, the main word lines MW, the sub-word lines SW and the sub-common data lines ISO each extend in a first direction, as shown in the attached sketch. In particular, the first direction in this sketch is the vertical direction. The data lines and the main-

common data lines MIO, each extends in a second direction which is horizontal in the attached sketch. For purposes of better understanding the present claims, the attached sketch is also marked to show the location of regions in the example of Fig. 5 that can correspond to the claimed first, second, third and fourth regions (noting that this reference to Fig. 5 is solely for purposes of example, and not intended to limit the claimed invention only to this particular example).

In the Ikeda reference, on the other hand, the structural arrangement of the various lines is actually different than that set forth in independent claims 1, 10 and 19. In particular, referring to the attached sketch, it can be seen that first data lines DL1 are parallel with second data lines DL2. From the Office Action, the second data lines DL2 are indicated as corresponding to the sub-common data lines of the present claims 1, 10 and 19 (e.g., see page 4 of the Office Action). However, in the present claims, the sub-common data lines extend in the first direction while the data lines extend in the second direction, quite to the contrary of the arrangement in Ikeda in which the first data lines DL1 and the second data lines DL2 (corresponding to the sub-common data lines) extend in the same direction. In addition, in Ikeda, the third data lines DL3, which correspond to the main-common data lines of the claims, are perpendicular to the first data lines DL1, contrary to the claim language of claims 1, 10 and 19 in which the data lines and main-common data lines extend in the same second direction. Therefore, the structure defined in amended claims 1, 10 and 19 clearly defines a different structural arrangement than that taught or suggested by Ikeda. Accordingly, reconsideration and removal of the prior art rejection based on Ikeda is earnestly solicited.

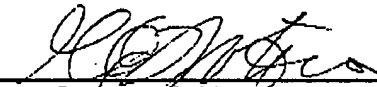
If the Examiner believes that there are any other points which may be clarified or otherwise disposed of, either by telephone discussion or by personal interview,

the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.138. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (501.34214R00).

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

By 
Gregory E. Montone
Registration No. 28,141

GEM/kd
703/312-6600

FAX RECEIVED

MAR 26 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800

501.34214R00

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: T. TAKAHASHI et al.
Serial No.: 09/974,962
Filed: October 12, 2001
For: SEMICONDUCTOR MEMORY
Group: 2824
Examiner: T. Nguyen

FAX RECEIVED

MAR 26 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800

STATEMENT OF STATUS AND SUPPORT
FOR CHANGES IN CLAIMS

Assistant Commissioner
for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

March 26, 2003

Sir:

In accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.173, it is noted that the status of the claims, as of the present date of the Amendment being filed herewith, is that all of the original claims 1-9 have now been amended, and new claims 10-19 remain pending in this case, with amendments being made to claims 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19 by the amendment filed on even date herewith. In particular, independent claims 1, 10 and 19 have each been amended to clarify the directions of various claimed lines in a manner which is supported by Fig. 5 of the specification, as discussed in the remarks of the attached Amendment. All of the dependent claims, both original and new, have been amended to respond to the claim objection set forth in the November 26, 2002 Office Action, and claim 10 has been amended to add a paragraph regarding the third regions in response to the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, rejection.

It is noted that the reference for support for the added claim language in Fig. 5 is not intended to suggest that this figure represents the only support for the claim language, or that the invention is intended to be limited to the specific illustration represented by this figure.

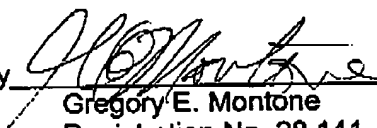
If the Examiner believes that there are any other points which may be clarified or otherwise disposed of, either by telephone discussion or by personal interview, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (501.34214R00).

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

By


Gregory E. Montone
Registration No. 28,141

GEM/kd
703/312-6600